TITLE

METHOD OF ELECTRONICALLY PLAYING A CASINO CARD GAME

5   CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation-in part of United States Application No. 10/401,996, filed March 28, 2003, which claimed the benefit of United States Provisional Application No. 60/368,898, filed March 29, 2002. The disclosures of both of such applications are incorporated herein by reference.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates in general to a casino card game. In particular, this invention relates to a casino card game that is adaptable for electronic play and that provides a high house advantage in a casino gambling environment, while at the same

15   time provides a fast-paced game that gives players the opportunity to wager and profit under a variety of scenarios that are dependent upon the outcome of a dealer hand.

Casino gambling has become an extremely popular entertainment alternative that is becoming more readily available in a variety of locations, including many urban locations. In view of the growing number of available locations, casinos find

20   themselves competing against one another for patrons. One method for casinos to attract patrons is to provide gaming options that are entertaining and offer the potential for winning large amounts of money in the form of bonus wagering options or jackpot wagering options. However, casinos must also choose games that provide a profitable return for the casino. In any given casino, particularly those casinos where the floor

25   space is statutorily limited by gaming regulation or is physically limited (such as in a riverboat gambling environment), it is desirable that the games that are provided generate a maximum amount of income for the casino.

There are a number of factors that affect the profitability of a casino game. One factor is the house advantage of a game, which is a measure of the amount of

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profit that the casino realizes by offering a particular game on its gambling floor. Another factor is the quantity of hands that can be played in a specified time period associated with the game, which is often referred to as the "action" of the game. In some jurisdictions, gaming regulations set maximums on the amounts of the house

5   advantages of the casino games. As a result, casinos find it attractive to offer casino games that have a fast "action" to increase profitability.

To maximize floor space utilization and playing action, many casinos have also incorporated electronic gambling machines. Electronic gambling machines can take a variety of forms. An example of a traditional electronic gambling machine is the slot

10   machine. However, electronic versions of popular table card games, such as Poker or Blackjack, have also become increasingly popular. Electronic gambling machines are generally highly profitable to casinos, as they have low operating costs compared to the operating costs associated with table games, and they are also capable of a faster rate of play. Additionally, electronic gaming machines are desirable because they

15   appeal to players of every skill level, while still having the ability to offer large payouts, including bonus and jackpot wagering options, in exchange for a small wager. In addition to casino gambling environments, variations of electronic gambling machines have also become increasing popular in various other urban locations as well as private home entertainment. For example, many bars and restaurants have made

20   electronic gambling machines available to patrons in their bar areas. In the home environment, the concept of electronic gambling has been embraced using both video game players that use cartridges containing various game programs as well as electronic gaming using personal computers.

In certain types of popular casino card games, such as Blackjack and variations

25   thereof, players compete against a virtual dealer. Casino card games of this type are relatively fast-paced, provide the opportunity for more than one person to win during each hand, and allow bets to be resolved quickly. However, it has been found to be somewhat difficult to modify such games to provide players with desirably high bonus or jackpot opportunities. Consequently, large pay-outs are generally not available in

these types of casino card games. In other types of popular casino card games, such as Poker and variations thereof, players compete against one another. Casino card games of this type allow the opportunity for the players to generate large pay-outs. However, it has been found that such casino card games are relatively slow-paced. Variations of

5 Poker, such as Caribbean Stud Poker and Pai Gow Poker, have been developed to incorporate play against the casino dealer, as well as to provide the opportunity for more that one person to win during each hand. However, these variations are generally based on complicated betting and ranking schemes that render such games undesirable for the inexperienced gambler. Thus, it would be desirable to provide an

10 improved casino card game that is adaptable to electronic play and provides a high house advantage in a casino environment, while at the same time provides a fast-paced game that gives players the opportunity to wager and profit under a variety of scenarios that are dependent upon the outcome of a dealer's hand.

15 ## SUMMARY·OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an improved casino card game that is adaptable for electronic play and that provides a high house advantage in a casino environment, while at the same time provides a fast-paced game that gives players the opportunity to wager and profit under a variety of scenarios that are dependent upon the outcome of a

20 dealer hand. For both table play and electronic play, an initial contract wager and a bonus wager are placed to participate in the card game. A three card player hand is dealt face down to the player, a three card primary dealer hand is dealt face down to the dealer, and a three card dealer secondary hand is dealt face down to the dealer. Then, one of the cards of the primary dealer hand is exposed. The player hand is

25 examined to determine the point total thereof, and an additional wager is placed to continue to participate in the card game. Then, the remaining two cards of the primary dealer hand are exposed, and the point total of the primary dealer hand is determined. If desired, one of the cards in the primary dealer hand may be replaced with one of the cards in the secondary dealer hand if the point total of the primary dealer hand is less

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than a predetermined minimum amount. Lastly, the contract wager and the additional wager are resolved by comparing the point total of the primary dealer hand to the point total of the player hand, and the bonus wager is resolved by comparing the point total of the player hand with a bonus pay table.

5   Various objects and advantages of this invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments, when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10   Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a gaming table that can be used to play a casino card game in accordance with this invention.

Figs. 2A and 2B are first and second portions of a flow chart of a method for playing the basic casino card game of this invention.

Fig. 3 is a flow chart of a first modified method for playing the casino card

15   game according to the method illustrated in Figs. 2A and 2B when a bonus wager is made.

Fig. 4 is a flow chart of a second modified method for playing the casino card game according to the method illustrated in Figs. 2A and 2B when a jackpot wager is made.

20   Fig. 5 is a front plan view of a video gambling machine configured to practice the method of this invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings, there is illustrated in Fig. 1 a gaming table,

25   indicated generally at 10, that can be used to play a casino card game in accordance with this invention. The name of this gaming table 10 is identified as "Thirty-Three" in the illustrated embodiment, although such is not required. The gaming table 10 includes a plurality of individual player areas 12 and a dealer area 14. The illustrated gaming table 10 provides six individual player areas 12, which is the preferred number

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of player areas based upon the spatial limitations of the gaming table 10 and the relative comfort of the players. It will be appreciated, however, that the gaming table 10 may have any desired number of individual player areas 12. Each of the individual player areas 12 includes a contract wager betting area 16, a bonus wager betting area

5   18, a doubling wager betting area 20, and a player's hand area 22. The dealer's area 14 includes a chip rack 24 for holding gaming chips, an area for a primary dealer hand 25, an area for a secondary dealer hand 26, and a die cup 27. The die cup 27 contains a single die (not shown) therein having indicia provided thereon representing outcomes of either one, two, or three. The purpose for the die cup 27 and the die will be

10   explained below. The dealer area 14 may also include a shuffling machine 28 from which cards may be dealt to the players and the dealer, a discard rack 29 for storing cards discarded from the players and the dealer, and a metered jackpot control area (not shown), which is used when a progressive jackpot is offered as the jackpot wager option for the casino card game.

15   The casino card game is played using at least one standard fifty-two card deck of playing cards. In a first embodiment, table play of the casino card game uses two standard decks of playing cards in an alternating arrangement. The alternating arrangement involves using a first deck of playing cards to deal the individual player hands 22 and the primary and secondary dealer hands 25 and 26. The dealer then uses

20   a second deck of playing cards to perform any subsequent dealing, such as where the dealer does not initially meet her qualifying hand, as will be explained in greater detail below.

             Figs. 2A and 2b illustrated portions of a flow chart of the method, indicated generally at 30, for playing the basic casino card game of this invention. Prior to

25   beginning the method 30, a dealer preferably shuffles at least one standard deck including fifty-two playing cards. This can be accomplished in any desired manner, such as by manual shuffling or using the automated shuffling machine 28 mentioned above. For electronic play of the casino card game, the electronic control device is programmed to such that the cards are randomly selected from a set representing at

least one standard deck including fifty-two playing cards. Following the shuffling of the playing cards, the method 30 of this invention begins with a first step 31, wherein the players make one or more opening bets in their respective playing areas 12 on the gaming table 10. In this first step 31, the players must make an initial wager, called the contract wager, by placing at least a minimum betting amount in the contract wager betting area 16 on the gaming table 10. At the same time, the players may elect to make either an additional bonus wager or an additional jackpot wager in the bonus wager betting area 18 on the gaming table 10. Preferably, the players may elect to place either the bonus wager or the jackpot wager, but not both. However, if desired, the players may be allowed to place both the bonus wager and the jackpot wager. If a bonus wager is made, the wager is left by the dealer in the bonus wager betting area 18 on the gaming table 10. If a jackpot wager is made, the wager may be removed from the gaming table 10 by the dealer, as shown in step 32 of the method, and deposited in a safe location. At the same time, the dealer may cause the jackpot to be incremented in a known manner to reflect that the jackpot wagers were collected. In a manner that is described in detail below, the bonus wager and the jackpot wager provide the players with additional opportunities to win. For the purpose of facilitating the explanation of the basic method 30 of this invention, however, the method 30 will initially be described in the context of the basic operation of the casino card game, wherein no bonus wager or jackpot wager has been made in the first step 31.

In a third step 33 of the method 30, the dealer begins play by dealing the three card player hand 22 in each of the individual player areas 12 for which a contract bet has been made by a player. Each of the three card player hands 22 is dealt face down. The dealer also deals the three card primary dealer hand 25 and the three card secondary dealer hand 26. Both the primary dealer hand 25 and the secondary dealer hand 26 are also dealt face down. The dealing of the playing cards can be accomplished in any desired manner. For example, the dealer may initially deal all of the player hands 22, followed by dealing the primary dealer hand 25 and the secondary dealer hand 26. Alternatively, the dealer may simultaneously deal all of the player

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hands 22, the primary dealer hand 25, and the secondary dealer hand 26. Following the dealing procedure, the dealer may, if desired, place the die cup 27 containing the die on top of the secondary dealer hand 26 to clearly distinguish the secondary dealer hand 26 from the primary dealer hand 25.

Next, in a fourth step 34 of the method 30, the dealer exposes one of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 for all of the players to see. The decision as to which of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 is selected to be exposed may be left to the discretion of the dealer or can be determined using any desired method (always the middle playing card, for example). In any event, only one of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 is exposed for all of the players to see, while the remaining two playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 remain concealed. In a fifth step 35 of the method 30, the players examine the playing cards in their respective players hands 22 and calculate the point totals thereof. The point total of each of the players hands 22 is equal the sum of the point values of the individual playing cards contained in that hand. The point values of the playing cards can be determined as follows: (1) for numbered cards, the point value equal the value of the number thereon; (2) for face cards, the point value equals ten; and (3) for aces, the point value equals eleven. Using these point values, the lowest point total for a hand would be six (if the hand consists of three twos), and the highest point total for a hand would be thirty-three (if the hand consists of three aces).

The method 30 next enters a decision point 36, wherein each of the players determines whether it is advisable to continue playing the casino card game. This determination is made by each of the players based upon their individual decision as to whether they are likely to win, lose, or draw the hand with the dealer. If the calculated point total of the individual player hand 22 is greater than the calculated point total of the primary dealer hand 25, then the player will win the hand and will receive not only the original contract wager, but also a winning pay-out. If the calculated point total of the individual player hand 22 is less than the calculated point total of the primary dealer hand 25, then the player will lose the hand and will lose the original contract

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wager. Lastly, if the calculated point total of the individual player hand 22 is equal to the calculated point total of the primary dealer hand 25, then the player will draw the hand with the dealer and will receive only the original contract wager. However, because only one of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 is exposed for the player to see (while the remaining two playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 remain concealed), the player must accept an element of risk in making this decision.

If the player elects to not continue playing the casino card game, the method branches to a step 37, wherein the player folds the hand by returning the playing cards to the dealer. At that time, the dealer collects the contract wager from the player, and the hand is completed for that individual player. If, on the other hand, the player elects to continue playing the casino card game, the method branches to a step 38, wherein the player supplements the previously made contract wager by placing an additional wager in the doubling wager betting area 20 on the gaming table 10. Preferably, the additional wager will be the same amount as the contract wager and, thus, will be referred to herein as the double wager. After each player has either folded or elected to continue play in this manner, the method enters a step 39 wherein the dealer exposes the two remaining playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 and determines the point total thereof. In order to insure that the method 30 of this invention provides an adequate profit advantage for the casino, it is desirable that the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 be greater than a predetermined minimum point total. Thus, the method 30 enters a decision point 40, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than or equal a predetermined minimum point total, referred to as a qualifying hand. In the illustrated embodiment, the predetermined minimum point total for a qualifying primary dealer hand 25 is twenty-two. However, the predetermined minimum point total for the qualifying primary dealer hand 25 may be set at any desired value.

If the point total for the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than or equal to the predetermined minimum point total, then the method 30 branches from the decision

point 40 to a decision point 41, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than the point total of the player hand 22. If the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than the point total of the player hand 22, then the dealer wins the hand. Thus, the method 30 branches from the decision point 41 to a step 42, wherein the dealer collects both the contract wager and the double wager from the player, and the hand is ended for that player. If, on the other hand the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than the point total of the player hand 22, then the method branches from the decision point 41 to a decision point 43, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is less than the point total of the player hand 22. If the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is less than the point total of the player hand 22, then the player wins the hand. Thus, the method branches from the decision point 43 to a step 44, wherein the dealer returns both the contract wager and the double wager to the player, along with a winning amount, which is typically equal to the combined amount of both the contract wager and the double wager, and the hand is ended for that player. If the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is neither greater than nor less than the point total of the player hand 22, then the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is equal to the point total of the player hand 22. Thus, the method branches from the decision point 43 to a step 45, wherein the tied situation is resolved. A tied situation such as this can be resolved in any desired manner. Typically, the tied situation is resolved by having the dealer return both the contract wager and the double wager to the player, thus ending the hand for that player. Alternatively, the tied situation is resolved by allowing either the dealer or the player to win the hand, as described above. Furthermore, a tied situation may be resolved by a combination of these techniques, such as by having the dealer return both the contract wager and the double wager to the player except when the tie occurs on a specific number (twenty-two, for example), in which case the dealer wins the hand.

Referring back to the decision point 40, if the point total for the primary dealer hand 25 is less than the predetermined minimum point total, then the dealer is

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provided with an opportunity to replace one of the playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 with one of the playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the selection of the playing card in the primary dealer hand 25 is made by selecting the playing card therein having the lowest point

5   value. Thus, the method 30 branches from the decision point 40 to a step 46, wherein the dealer discards the playing card in the primary dealer hand 25 having the lowest point total and places it in the discard rack 29. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the selection of the playing card in the secondary dealer hand 26 to replace the playing card discarded from the primary dealer hand 25 is made by a random

10   event. To accomplish this, the dealer can use the die contained in the die cup 27 discussed above. The dealer initially removes the die cup 27 containing the die from its location on the gaming table 10 and offers it to one of the players. The die cup 27 may be offered to the players in any desired manner. For example, the dealer may initially offer the die cup 27 to the player on a predetermined side or end of the gaming

15   table 10. If that player declines the opportunity to roll the die, then the dealer may offer the die cup 27 sequentially around the gaming table 10 to the other players. If all of the players decline to roll the die, then the dealer may roll the die. Regardless, the die contained in the die cup 27 is rolled on the gaming table, as shown in step 47 of the method 30.

20   As discussed above, the die cup 27 contains a single die (not shown) therein having indicia provided thereon representing outcomes of either one, two, or three. For example, the die may be a conventional six-sided cube having indicia provided thereon representing outcomes of one on two of the sides, two on two of the sides, and three on two of the sides. When the die is rolled from the die cup 27, the outcome

25   thereof determines which one of the first, second, or third playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 (which, up to this point in the method 30 of this invention, have remained face down and, therefore, unexposed on the gaming table 10) will be selected to replace the playing card that the dealer just discarded from the primary dealer hand 25, as shown in step 48 of the method 30. Thus, if the outcome of the roll

of the die is a one, then the first of the three playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 will be selected to replace the playing card that the dealer just discarded from the primary dealer hand 25. The three playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 can be designated as the first, second, and third playing cards in any desired manner. After the designated one of the three playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 is added to the primary dealer hand 25, the remaining two playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 are discarded in the discard rack 29. The method 30 then enters the decision point 41 and continues as described above to complete the hand.

In a second embodiment of the invention, the casino card game can be adapted for electronic play. As shown by Fig. 5, a video gambling machine 70 is used to play the game of this invention. The video gambling machine 70 may include a visual display device 71, a player wagering device 72, a winnings payout device 73, and a central processing means interconnected to a power supply, both not shown. The video gambling machine 70 also includes a plurality of input selection devices 86 through 91 that are used to provide data input to the central processing means. The components of the video gambling machine 70 may be incorporated into a single unit, although it will appreciated that the components of the video gambling machine 70 may be arranged in any suitable configuration. The player wagering device 72 may be any suitable input device or combination of multiple input devices for applying a monetary or point credit for making the required wagers in accordance with the method of this invention. The illustrated embodiment includes both a coin slot 74 and a bill slot 75 to serve as the player wagering device 72. Additionally, the player wagering device 72 may include a return device 76 in conjunction with a refund selection knob 77 to return monetary or token wagers prior to the beginning of play, although such is not required. The electronic casino card game may also be played using intangible wagering means, such as credit or point wagers. Examples of play utilizing intangible wagering means include individual home gaming, where a player would play to accumulate point values, or Internet gambling applications that use credit based gambling wagers. Where intangible wagers are made, the player

wagering device 72 may include a keypad or selection device for making credit or point wagers.

Similarly, the winnings payout device 73 may include any suitable counting device, dispensing device, or combination thereof, for tallying and dispensing to the player any winnings earned while playing the video gambling machine 70. Where the video gambling machine 70 uses tangible wagering means, such as tokens or coins, a winnings payout device 73 may include a dispensing device, not shown, which deposits tangible monetary winnings through an opening 78 in the video gambling machine 70. The winnings payout device 73 may also include at least one counting device (not shown) or, alternatively, at least one counting function within the central processing unit of the video gambling machine 70. The counting device or function may cumulatively tally both wager credits and subsequent player winnings earned during continued play of the electronic casino card game. It will be appreciated that multiple counting devices may also be used to separately tally the wager credits and winnings of the player. A visual credit display 80 of the cumulative wager credits and winnings may also be provided on the visual display device 71. Upon completion of play of the video gambling machine 70, the player may select to cash out his credits and winnings by operating any suitable selection device that communicates to the central processing means that the player wishes to redeem his credits and winnings, such as a payout button 79 on the video gambling machine 70. The payout button 79 works in conjunction with the winnings payout device 73, described above, to return either tangible monetary winnings or a tangible representation of intangible winnings, such as a check or credit slip, to be redeemed accordingly.

The video display device 71 of the electronic gambling machine 70 displays an individual play area used to play the casino card game of the present invention. The player area includes an area for the three-card player hand 22, an area for the three-card primary dealer hand 25, and an area for the three-card secondary dealer hand 26 to be displayed. The player area may also include a contract wager betting prompt 81, a bonus wager betting prompt 82, a doubling wager betting prompt 83, a fold prompt

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84, and a die roll prompt 85. A representation of a single die 94 therein having indicia provided thereon representing outcomes of either one, two, or three is also displayed on the video display device. The use of the die 94 will be explained below.

The central processing means of the video gambling machine 70 performs the functions of the dealer during electronic play of the casino card game of this invention. The central processing means of the video gambling machine 70 randomly selects card values from those card values included in at least one standard fifty-two card deck of playing cards. In a first embodiment, the central processing means uses the card values of two standard decks of playing cards in an alternating arrangement. The alternating arrangement involves using the card values from a first deck of playing cards to deal the player hand 22 and the primary and secondary dealer hands 25 and 26. Card values from a second deck of playing cards are then used to perform any subsequent dealing, such as where the qualifying hand is not met, as will be explained in greater detail below.

Prior to beginning electronic play of the casino card game, the player may deposit a wagering credit into the wagering means 72. As previously discussed, this may be accomplished by using either tangible wagering means, such as tokens, coins, or paper currency, or by using intangible wagering means, such as credit or point transactions. Alternatively, where intangible wagering means are used, a preset point value may be set by the central processing means either instead of or in addition to a deposit by the player. A credit display 80 may be displayed on the visual display device 70 to inform the player of the amount of credit he has remaining.

Referring back to Figs. 2A and 2B, the method for playing the casino card game, indicated generally at 30, may be applied to electronic play of the casino card game as well. The method 30 of this embodiment again begins with a first step 31, wherein the player make one or more opening bets. In this first step 31, the players must make an initial contract wager. As shown in Fig. 5, the contract wager may be placed using any suitable input selection device that inputs to the central processing means that the player wishes to place the contract wager, such as a contract wager

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button 86 on the video gambling machine 70. A contract wager betting prompt 81 may also be included to indicate to the player that the contract wager may be made or has been made, although such is not required. In conjunction with making the contract wager, a wager display area 91 may display the amount placed as the contract wager.

5 Preferably, the amount of the contract wager is set to a predetermined amount, and the central processing means simultaneously subtracts the amount from the wagering credit 80 while adding the amount to the wager display 92. At the same time, the player may elect to make either an additional bonus wager or an additional jackpot wager. The bonus wager may be placed using any suitable input selection device that

10 inputs to the central processing means that the player wishes to place the bonus wager, such as a bonus wager button 87 on the video gambling machine 70. A bonus wager betting prompt 82 may also be included to indicate to the player that the bonus wager may be made or has been made, although such is not required. In the second step of the method 32, any bonus wager or jackpot wager made is credited accordingly.

15 Where a bonus wager option is used, the amount of the bonus wager is preferably set to a predetermined amount, which the central processing means simultaneously subtracts from the wagering credit 80 and adds the amount to the wager display 92. Where a progressive jackpot wager option is used, the predetermined wager amount will be subtracted from the wagering credit 80, and then added to a progressive

20 jackpot meter (not shown), which tallies the jackpot wagers from a plurality of interconnected video gambling machines 70. If a finite jackpot option is used, the wager will be subtracted from the wagering credit 80 and a jackpot indicator 93 may appear on the visual display device 71 to indicate that the player has elected to play for the jackpot option. Although a separate jackpot indicator 93 is illustrated, it will be

25 appreciated that the bonus wager betting prompt 82 may also be used as the jackpot indicator or, alternatively, no jackpot indicator may be provided. For the purpose of facilitating the explanation of the basic method 30 of this invention, however, the method 30 will initially be described in the context of the basic operation of the casino

card game, wherein no bonus wager or jackpot wager has been made in the first step 31.

In a third step 33 of the method 30, play begins when the player has completed his betting and indicates that he is ready to begin play. This can be achieved using any suitable input selection device that inputs to the central processing means that the player wished to begin play, such as a deal button 88 on the video gambling machine 70. Following the initiation of play by the player, a three-card player hand 22, a three-card primary dealer hand 25, and a three-card secondary dealer hand 26 are displayed on the video display device 71. Preferably, the player and dealer hands 22, 25, and 26 are initially dealt face down.

Next, in a fourth step 34 of the method 30, the central processing means exposes one of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 for the player to see. Preferably, the card to be displayed from the primary dealer hand 25 is randomly selected by the central processing means. It will be appreciated, however, that the card from the primary dealer hand 25 to be revealed may also be determined using any desired method (always the middle playing card, for example). In any event, only one of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 is exposed for the player to see, while the remaining two playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 remain concealed. In a fifth step 35 of the method 30, the players hand 22 is revealed to the player, allowing the player to calculate the point totals thereof. The point total of the player's hand 22 is equal the sum of the point values of the individual playing cards contained in that hand. The point values of the playing cards can be determined as follows: (1) for numbered cards, the point value equal the value of the number thereon; (2) for face cards, the point value equals ten; and (3) for aces, the point value equals eleven. Using these point values, the lowest point total for a hand would be six (if the hand consists of three twos), and the highest point total for a hand would be thirty-three (if the hand consists of three aces).

The method 30 next enters a decision point 36, wherein the player determines whether it is advisable to continue playing the casino card game. This determination is

made by the player based upon his individual decision as to whether he is likely to win, lose, or draw the hand with the dealer. If the calculated point total of the player hand 22 is greater than the calculated point total of the primary dealer hand 25, then the player will win the hand and will receive not only the original contract wager, but also a winning pay-out. If the calculated point total of the individual player hand 22 is less than the calculated point total of the primary dealer hand 25, then the player will lose the hand and will lose the original contract wager. Lastly, if the calculated point total of the individual player hand 22 is equal to the calculated point total of the primary dealer hand 25, then the player will draw the hand with the dealer and will receive only the original contract wager. However, because only one of the three playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 is exposed for the player to see (while the remaining two playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 remain concealed), the player must accept an element of risk in making this decision.

If the player elects to not continue playing the casino card game, the method branches to a step 37, wherein the player folds the hand. The player may fold his hand using any suitable input selection device 86 through 91 that inputs to the central processing means that the player wishes to fold his hand, such as a fold button 90 on the video gambling machine 70. A fold prompt 84 may also be included to indicate to the player that he may or has chosen to fold his hand, although such is not required. At that time, the wager display 92 is reset to zero, and the hand is completed for the player. If, on the other hand, the player elects to continue playing the casino card game, the method branches to a step 38, wherein the player must place an additional doubling wager to continue play of the electronic casino card game. The player may place his doubling wager using any suitable input selection device that inputs to the central processing means that the player wishes to continue play, such as a doubling wager button 89 on the video gambling machine 70. A doubling wager betting prompt 83 may also be included to indicate to the player that the doubling wager may be made or has been made, although such is not required. Preferably, the doubling wager is set to the same predetermined amount as the contract wager and, thus, will be referred to

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herein as the double wager. When the double wager is made, the central processing means simultaneously subtracts the predetermined betting amount from the wagering credit 80 and adds the amount to the wager display 92. After the player has either folded or elected to continue play in this manner, the method enters a step 39 wherein the two remaining playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 are exposed to the player, and the point total thereof is determined. In order to insure that the method 30 of this invention provides an adequate profit advantage for the casino, it is desirable that the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 be greater than a predetermined minimum point total. Thus, the method 30 enters a decision point 40, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than or equal a predetermined minimum point total, referred to as a qualifying hand. In the illustrated embodiment, the predetermined minimum point total for a qualifying primary dealer hand 25 is twenty-two. However, the predetermined minimum point total for the qualifying primary dealer hand 25 may be set at any desired value.

If the point total for the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than or equal to the predetermined minimum point total, then the method 30 branches from the decision point 40 to a decision point 41, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than the point total of the player hand 22. If the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than the point total of the player hand 22, then the dealer wins the hand. Thus, the method 30 branches from the decision point 41 to a step 42, wherein both the contract wager and the double wager are collected from the player, and the hand is ended for the player. If, on the other hand the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is greater than the point total of the player hand 22, then the method branches from the decision point 41 to a decision point 43, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is less than the point total of the player hand 22. If the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is less than the point total of the player hand 22, then the player wins the hand. Thus, the method branches from the decision point 43 to a step 44, wherein the contract wager and the double wager are credited to the wager credit 80 of the

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player, along with a winning amount, which is typically equal to the combined amount of both the contract wager and the double wager, and the hand is ended for the player. If the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is neither greater than nor less than the point total of the player hand 22, then the point total of the primary dealer hand 25 is equal to the point total of the player hand 22. Thus, the method branches from the decision point 43 to a step 45, wherein the tied situation is resolved. A tied situation such as this can be resolved in any desired manner. Typically, the tied situation is resolved by having both the contract wager and the double wager credited to the wager credit 80 of the player, thus ending the hand for that player. Alternatively, the tied situation is resolved by allowing either the dealer or the player to win the hand, as described above. Furthermore, a tied situation may be resolved by a combination of these techniques, such as by crediting both the contract wager and the double wager to the player except when the tie occurs on a specific number (twenty-two, for example), in which case the dealer wins the hand.

Referring back to the decision point 40, if the point total for the primary dealer hand 25 is less than the predetermined minimum point total, one of the playing cards in the primary dealer hand 25 is replaced with one of the playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the selection of the playing card in the primary dealer hand 25 is made by selecting the playing card therein having the lowest point value. Thus, the method 30 branches from the decision point 40 to a step 46, wherein the card having the lowest point value in the primary dealer hand 25 is removed from the visual display device 71. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the selection of the playing card in the secondary dealer hand 26 to replace the playing card discarded from the primary dealer hand 25 is made by a random event. To accomplish this, the player may electronically roll a die 94. The player may roll the die 94 using any suitable input selection device that inputs to the central processing means that the player wishes to roll the die, such as a die roll button 91 on the video gambling machine 70. A die roll prompt 85 may also be included to indicate to the player that he may or has chosen to roll the die, although

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such is not required. As discussed above, the die 94 has indicia provided thereon representing outcomes of either one, two, or three. When the die 94 is rolled, the outcome thereof determines which one of the first, second, or third playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 (which, up to this point in the method 30 of this invention,

have remained face down and, therefore, unexposed on the visual display device 71) will be selected to replace the playing card that was removed from the primary dealer hand 25, as shown in step 48 of the method 30. Thus, if the outcome of the roll of the die is a one, then the first of the three playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 will be selected to replace the playing card removed from the primary dealer hand 25. The three playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 can be designated as the first, second, and third playing cards in any desired manner. After the designated one of the three playing cards in the secondary dealer hand 26 is added to the primary dealer hand 25, the remaining two playing cards may be removed from the visual display device 71. The method 30 then enters the decision point 41 and continues as described above.

From the above description of the method 30 of this invention, it can be seen that the various outcomes of the basic casino card game are determined by comparing the point totals of the players hands 22 with the point totals of the primary dealer hand 25 (either with or without a supplemental playing card provided from the secondary dealer hand 26). However, as discussed above, in the first step 31 of the method 30 of this invention, the players may make not only the contract wager, but also have an opportunity to place either an additional bonus wager or an additional jackpot wager in either the bonus wager betting area 18 on the gaming table 10 or by selecting the bonus wager option 92 on the video gambling game 70. In the preferred embodiments of this invention, the outcomes of the bonus wager and the jackpot wager are determined not by comparing the point totals of the players hands 22 with the point totals of the primary dealer hand 25, but by comparing the point totals of the players hands 22 with a predetermined standard of reference, such as a bonus pay table or a jackpot pay table.

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Fig. 3 is a flow chart of a first modified method, indicated generally at 50, for playing both the table version and the electronic version of the casino card game according to the method 30 illustrated in Figs. 2A and 2B when a bonus wager is made in step 31. The bonus wager can be resolved after the basic casino card game has been completed, as described above. Thus, the method 30 branches from either the step 42, the step 44, or the step 45 (depending upon the particular outcome that was achieved) to a decision point 51, wherein it is determined whether such a bonus wager was made. If no bonus wager was made, then the hand is completed as described above. However, if a bonus wager was made, then the modified method 50 branches to a decision point 52, wherein it is determined whether the point total of the player's hand 22 is listed on a bonus pay table. If the point total in the player's hand 22 is not listed on the bonus pay table, then the player loses the bonus wager. Thus, the modified method 50 enters a step 54, wherein the bonus wager is collected from the player. If, on the other hand, the point total in the player's hand 22 is listed on the bonus pay table, then the player wins the bonus wager. Thus, the modified method 50 enters a step 55, wherein the player is paid a bonus amount that is set forth in the bonus pay table.

Table 1 below illustrates several examples of bonus pay tables that can be used when a player makes an additional bonus wager in the first step 31 of the method 30 of this invention.

TABLE 1 - BONUS PAY TABLES

Player Hand Point Total	Probability Of Occurrence	Pay Table A Pay-Out Odds	Pay Table B Pay-Out Odds	Pay Table C Pay-Out Odds
6	0.0181%	100:1	50:1	50:1
26	5.7195%	-	2:1	2:1
27	5.0136%	2:1	2:1	2:1
28	4.1628%	3:1	2:1	2:1

29	3.5475%	3:1	2:1	3:1
30	3.8009%	3:1	3:1	3:1
31	2.2605%	4:1	5:1	5:1
32	0.4344%	15:1	10:1	10:1
33	0.0181%	250:1	200:1	100:1

In Table 1, it is assumed that there are nine different bonus point totals that a given player's hand 22 can achieve (namely, six and twenty-six through thirty-three) for which a bonus pay-out will be made, provided that a bonus wager was made at the first step 31 of the method 30. The approximate probabilities of occurrence for each of such point totals are also set forth in Table 1. For example, the approximate probability of occurrence of a player's hand 22 having a point total of six is 0.0181%, while the approximate probability of occurrence of a player's hand 22 having a point total of twenty-seven is 3.8009%.

Table 1 illustrates three sample pay tables (identified as Pay Table A, Pay Table B, and Pay Table C) that can be used to determine the amounts of the bonus pay-outs that will be made if one of the nine bonus point totals is achieved in a player's hand 22. For example, if Pay Table A is used and a player's hand 22 has a point total of six, then the bonus wager that was made at the first step 31 of the method 30 will result in a bonus pay-out of one hundred times the amount of the bonus wager, while if a player's hand 22 has a point total of twenty-seven, then the bonus wager that was made at the first step 31 of the method 30 will result in a bonus pay-out of three times the amount of the bonus wager. If Pay Table B is used and a player's hand 22 has a point total of six, then the bonus wager that was made at the first step 31 of the method 30 will result in a bonus pay-out of fifty times the amount of the bonus wager, while if a player's hand 22 has a point total of twenty-seven, then the bonus wager that was made at the first step 31 of the method 30 will result in a bonus pay-out of two times the amount of the bonus wager. It should be noted that in Pay Table A, a player's hand 22

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having a point total of twenty-six will not pay-out a bonus. The pay-out odds that are set forth in the various bonus pay tables can be adjusted as desired.

Fig. 4 is a flow chart of a second modified method, indicated generally at 60, for playing both the table version and the electronic version of the casino card game according to the method 30 illustrated in Figs. 2A and 2B when a jackpot wager is made in step 31. The jackpot wager can also be resolved after the basic casino card game has been completed, as described above. Thus, the method 30 branches from either the step 42, the step 44, or the step 45 (depending upon the particular outcome that was achieved) to a decision point 61, wherein it is determined whether such a jackpot wager was made. If no jackpot wager was made, then the hand is completed as described above. However, if a jackpot wager was made, then the modified method 60 branches to a decision point 62, wherein it is determined whether the point total in the players hand 22 is a qualifying jackpot hand. A qualifying jackpot hand is defined as a point total for which a jackpot will be paid. Typically, the qualifying jackpot hands are point totals that have the lowest probability of occurrence, such as six and thirty-three. However, the qualifying jackpot hands can be defined in any desired manner. If the point total in the player's hand 22 is not a qualifying jackpot hand, then the player loses the jackpot wager. Thus, the modified method 60 enters a step 64, wherein the jackpot wager is collected from the player. If, on the other hand, the point total in the player's hand 22 is a qualifying jackpot hand, then the player wins the jackpot. Thus, the modified method 60 enters a step 65, wherein the player is paid the jackpot. The jackpot can be a fixed amount, or it can be a progressive amount that accumulates in size in any desired manner, such as a conventional progressive jackpot that is accumulated from a plurality of different gaming tables 10 or electronic gambling machines 70 as is well known in the art.

In accordance with the provisions of the patent statutes, the principle and mode of operation of this invention have been explained and illustrated in its preferred embodiment. However, it must be understood that this invention may be practiced

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otherwise than as specifically explained and illustrated without departing from its spirit or scope.